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IN

REFORMATORY INSTITUTIONS

BY

FRANKLIN H. BRIGGS

Superintendent of the State Industrial
School, Binghamton, N. Y.

SECOND EDITION



SYRACUSE, N. Y.

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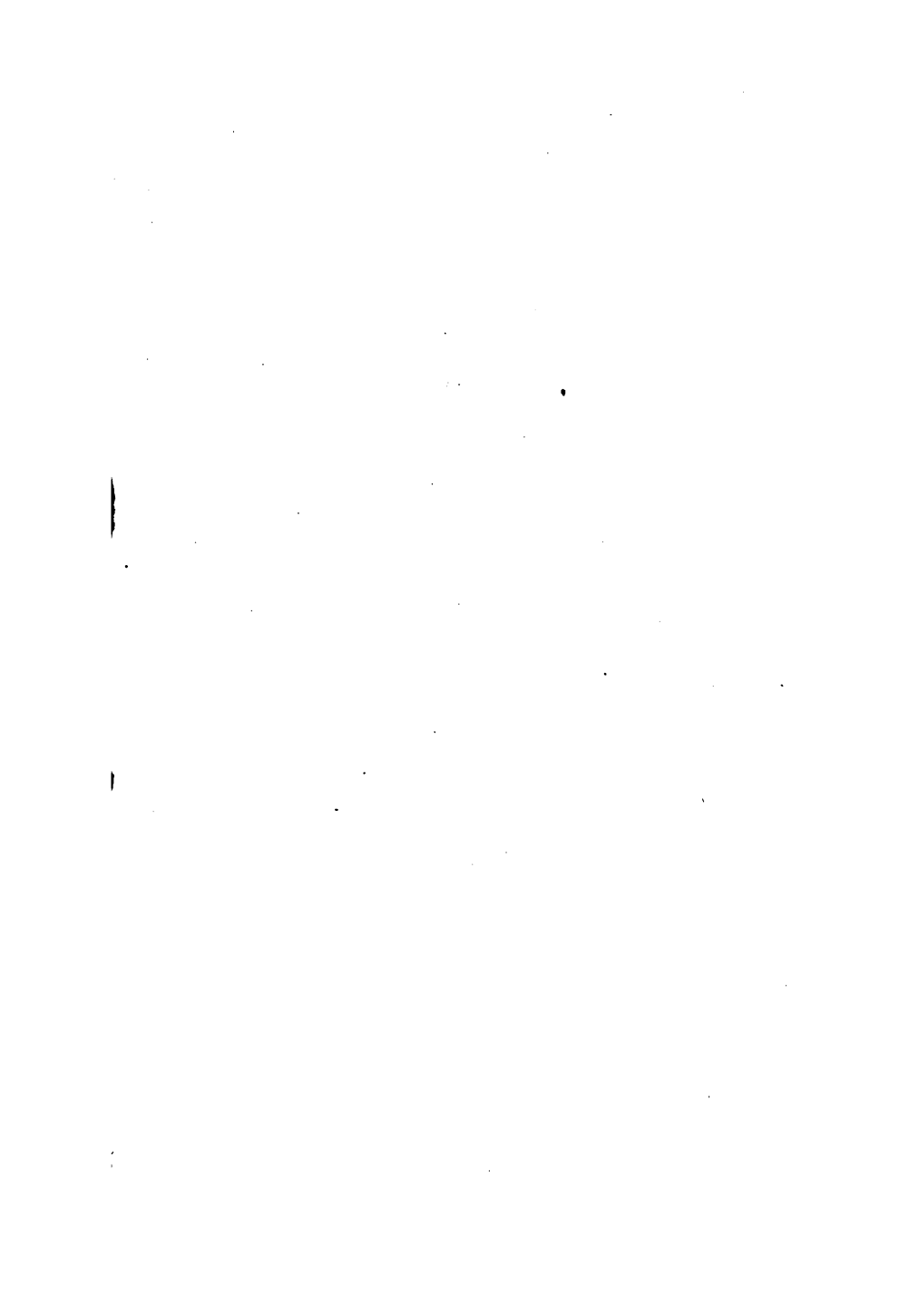
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INDUSTRIAL TRAINING
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Industrial Training in Reformatory Institutions

The State Industrial school, because of its exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition, was requested by this association to present a paper on Industrial Training in Reformatories.

It should be noted at the outset that this institution is a reform school with industrial, common school, and military departments. Children between the ages of twelve and sixteen are received upon commitment by magistrates having competent jurisdiction.

This paper proposes to discuss Industrial Training as it is carried on in the State Industrial school. The range of industries represented in the schools is sufficiently large to meet the varied mental and physical characteristics of the inmates; it is therefore possible practically to offer to each boy his choice of a trade.

In wood working we have schools of Carpentry, Wood Turning and Pattern Making, and Wood Carving. The schools for the instruction in iron working are Blacksmithing, Machine Construction and Design, and Foundry Practice. We have also Steam and Gas Fitting, Electrical Construction and Repair, including the actual operation of an Electric Plant, and the Care and Firing of Steam Boilers. Other schools represented are *Clay Modeling, Baking, Painting, Decorating, etc., Printing, Bricklaying, and Plastering, Shoe-Making, Tailoring, Gardening, Floriculture, and Laundry work.*

In each of these shops we have an instructor who is a skilled workman in the trade he is to teach; one who can perform a piece of work, himself, which shall be a model.

A boy coming to the institution is at first set to some of the various household employments, such as care of dormitories, dining-rooms or play-grounds; in the kitchen to assist about the cooking or at repairing shirts and stockings.

He is thus employed until his military attainments entitle him to promotion to a company, when he is certified for assignment to a Trade School. He has been in the institution sufficiently long for the officers to become acquainted with him and discover his predilections. The boy himself in conversation with his mates has learned about the different Trade Schools and has a fairly definite idea of what he desires to do. As far as practicable the boy's wishes in the matter of learning a trade are respected. If he has no decided preference he is placed at the work deemed best suited to his capacity. Once assigned to a Trade School he remains there during his stay in the institution, unless there are very strong grounds for his transfer.

It should also be stated at this point that the Common Schools are made to supplement as far as practicable the instruction given in the Technological Schools. Mechanical Drawing is taught in all grades, so that a boy becomes accustomed to making and interpreting working drawings

before he has begun work in the Trade Schools. Free-hand drawing, so essential to the skilled workman, is also taught in all grades. Instruction is also given in that portion of geometry, the practical side, which has so largely to do with the work of the mechanic. The work in arithmetic deals largely with problems which confront the skilled workman. At the same time the shopwork reacts upon the school-room; for the boy, being required to do work in the shop involving principles which he studies in school, sees at once the necessity for learning the lessons given him, and feeling such need he progresses much more rapidly than he otherwise would.

The instruction in the shops is wholly individual; class work is not attempted: boys are constantly being received and discharged, a condition that render class work impossible. In this respect our Technical Schools differ from others.

In the carpenter shop the course of instruction consists of a series of blue print working draw-

ings, which begin with the use of the gauge, tri-square, and saw, and increase in difficulty and in the number of tools involved until the boy has had practice in all the phases of his trade with which he will come in contact in actual experience.

As rapidly as the boy gains skill he is called upon to put it in practical operation in the making of the varied and numerous articles required about the grounds and buildings. It is essential to a clear understanding of the conditions to state that we have an enclosure of ten acres, largely covered with buildings, included within which are nearly twelve acres of flooring. This necessitates a large amount of carpenter work. Our methods at this point diverge widely from the Manual Training School methods. Our experience has shown that the educational value *per se* is just as great when the object which the boy has made is put to some practical use, as when it is hung upon the show board or used for kindling wood. The dovetailing that a boy

is required to do in making a drawer has quite as much mental discipline in it as though he made a dovetail from two pieces of board which he was immediately thereafter to throw away; but in addition to the educational value of the drawer-dovetailing is the added interest in the work because of the use to which it is to be put. To be sure this method results in the loss of some material, as the work may not be done the first time in a sufficiently workmanlike way, which necessitates its being done a second time; but the more rapid progress made by the pupils more than compensates for the loss of material.

In the wood turning and pattern shop the same general plan is pursued; as soon as a boy is sufficiently advanced to make a pattern, a working drawing is placed before him and a pattern required. If he neglects to allow for shrinkage, the casting is too small. If he fails to provide proper draught, his pattern will not draw from the old; in either case another effort is necessary. Soon he is required to make his

own working drawings from sketches furnished or dimensions given. All the machinery used in the institution is made, just as far as possible, in the shops; and the patterns for the castings for these machines are made by the boys of the pattern shop.

In the wood carving shop, drawing and clay models are required to precede the carving.

In our blacksmithing shop, boys first act as helpers; then are put on a fire, being taught how to build, care for and clean a fire, forge, upset, and weld iron, temper steel, forge tools, polish and finish.

In the machine shop the materials on which he works are castings from the foundry, or iron or steel which is to be used in the construction of machinery. He is taught to chip and file, to use the lathe, drill, press, shaper, planer, milling machine, and emery grinder, to forge and temper tools for the machines mentioned.

In the foundry he learns how to temper the sand, prepare moulds and cores, to charge the

cupola, and take off a heat. The patterns used are those prepared by the pattern shop. The castings are all used for the various purposes of the institution.

In the clay modeling shop the boy is allowed to follow his own ideas to a great degree, the only condition being that whatever he undertakes he shall work at systematically and bring it to a reasonable degree of completeness.

The school of painting, decorating, etc., gives instruction in the art of mural decoration, painting on wood, brick, plaster, and iron, kalsomining, graining, and wood finishing. The work in decorating is all done free hand. A large amount of work is done about the buildings by the boys employed in this shop.

The girls are taught dressmaking, plain sewing, household economy, hygiene, and home nursing and cooking. The work in cooking includes the properties of foods, the proportions of different kinds of foods required for the proper nourishment of the body, and the proper selection, preparation, and serving of foods.

This brief outline of the work of some of the shops will serve to give a general notion of the methods employed in them all.

Having thus given an idea of the work itself, let us consider the Industrial Training as an educational element.

The average girl or boy sent to a reformatory is weak physically, intellectually, and morally. Systematic exercise, intelligently directed, aids in overcoming these weaknesses.

The intellect, having a powerful influence over both the physical and moral, is the first and most important element to arouse. Delinquent children lack continuity, without which there can be no industry, no settled purpose, no character. To overcome this there must be something of sufficient interest placed before the child that he will, without conscious effort, give his attention to. Once given, the teacher wisely directing will hold it to the work in hand, and thus lead to the development of mental strength.

There are boys in the State Industrial school

at the present time whose interest we could not arouse in the common schools. Some were naturally so weak mentally that after weeks of conscientious work on the part of the teacher, they were not able to repeat from memory a four-verse stanza of a poem for children. Others would not apply themselves sufficiently long to learn anything. Some of these boys were placed in the clay modeling and wood carving shop. The boys who had been regarded as almost idiots soon began to show improvement. The boys who had been especially troublesome elsewhere, in the clay work ceased to be annoying. When a boy begins work with clay he seems to feel himself in the unity of things and he becomes happy accordingly; when he sees the formless clay take shape beneath his touch, a sense of power is born within him which arouses and quickens him. The boy who modeled the horse from which the cast was taken which is shown in our World's Fair Exhibit was considered a dull boy until work in the line of modeling developed the talent within him.

Another boy whom I have in mind was a cruel, cunning, vicious specimen of humanity; apparently nothing could get hold of him. A few days since in the wood working shop, where he is employed, he requested me to look at a molding board which he had made. The old spirit seemed to be gone as he showed me the result of his handiwork; unconsciously he had found the secret of power. Another boy in the same shop was regarded as very weak-minded little more than an idiot. He could not hold his attention to one thing for any appreciable length of time. He was the victim of self-abuse. His body partook of the general characteristics of his mind. Gradually he has been gaining in his shop work, his eye has taken new brightness and his face has cleared. In the shop he gives excellent attention to the instruction given him and is showing growth in the use of tools. His school work shows the effect of the shop training.

One boy was a persistent offender in shop and

school. Nothing seemed to reach him permanently. When decorating was introduced as an addition to the course of instruction in the paint shop, where this boy was employed, he expressed a desire to do the decorative work and his wish was gratified. His first effort showed his ability and a new manhood asserted itself within him. These are the examples of the effects of Industrial Training, intellectually, on the most unsatisfactory individuals with whom we have to do. The benefits are more marked in the case of those who have less to contend with.

These are specific examples. Now, permit me to generalize. The child delights to do, and to do with the tangible. Having accomplished one thing, he desires something more difficult to overcome. This is nature's way of giving strength: the Industrial Training furnishes the means with which nature may do her work. With an inborn liking for tools, the boy has no sooner done one thing than a more difficult one is furnished him, this in turn to be followed by

one more complex, each one involving the use of some tool or principle that the preceding one did not. The child's interest is thus constantly challenged, his attention is held unconsciously, and control over the mental current is gradually gained; as he progresses in his work, his reasoning powers are called into active use by the various requirements of the shop, the other mental faculties are also called into play to a greater or lesser degree, and the result is mental strength and quickness instead of weakness and inertness.

But we pass to Industrial Training as an element in moral growth. The great failing of children of this class is untruthfulness. Their other moral infirmities seem to spring from this source. Now, every time you require exactness on the part of the child, you are helping him to correct moral growth. He puts his ideas into clay, iron, wood, stone, brick and mortar, a garment, or whatever the case may be. The instructor has the child's idea in a tangible form before him. He can thus note the points in

which they are not truthful. Constant effort on the part of the instructor must result in a habit of exactness on the part of the boy, the result being that from habit he feels the truth, thinks the truth, tells the truth, and moral uplifting results. Furthermore, the employments and connected subjects have given the boy abundant wholesome food for thought. He no longer feeds upon products of an impure imagination, but upon the products of a healthy, strong perception, memory, and reason. In the gospel when the chambers were swept and garnished, the devils came back because there were no angels there; so, if you are to reform a human soul, you must not only eradicate the old unwholesome thoughts and desires, but you must implant the good, the true, and the noble in their stead.

As a means of employment for the inmates of reformatories, Industrial Training is superior to anything else. It is neither practicable nor desirable to keep such inmates at study all the

time. Too much recreation defeats rather than aids reformation, as it tends to emphasize the inmate's natural habit of idleness. Contract labor, or labor the product of which is put upon the market, also defeats the object for which reformatories are established because these systems put the stress not on *how*, but on *how much*. To be profitable, each inmate must learn to do one thing, and do that only. This he learns to do quickly and thereafter it possesses no interest for him. There is nothing to cause mental or moral growth; while with the Industrial Training, as already shown, there is a constant introduction of new ideas calling for increased knowledge and skill on the part of the inmates, resulting in continued mental and moral growth.

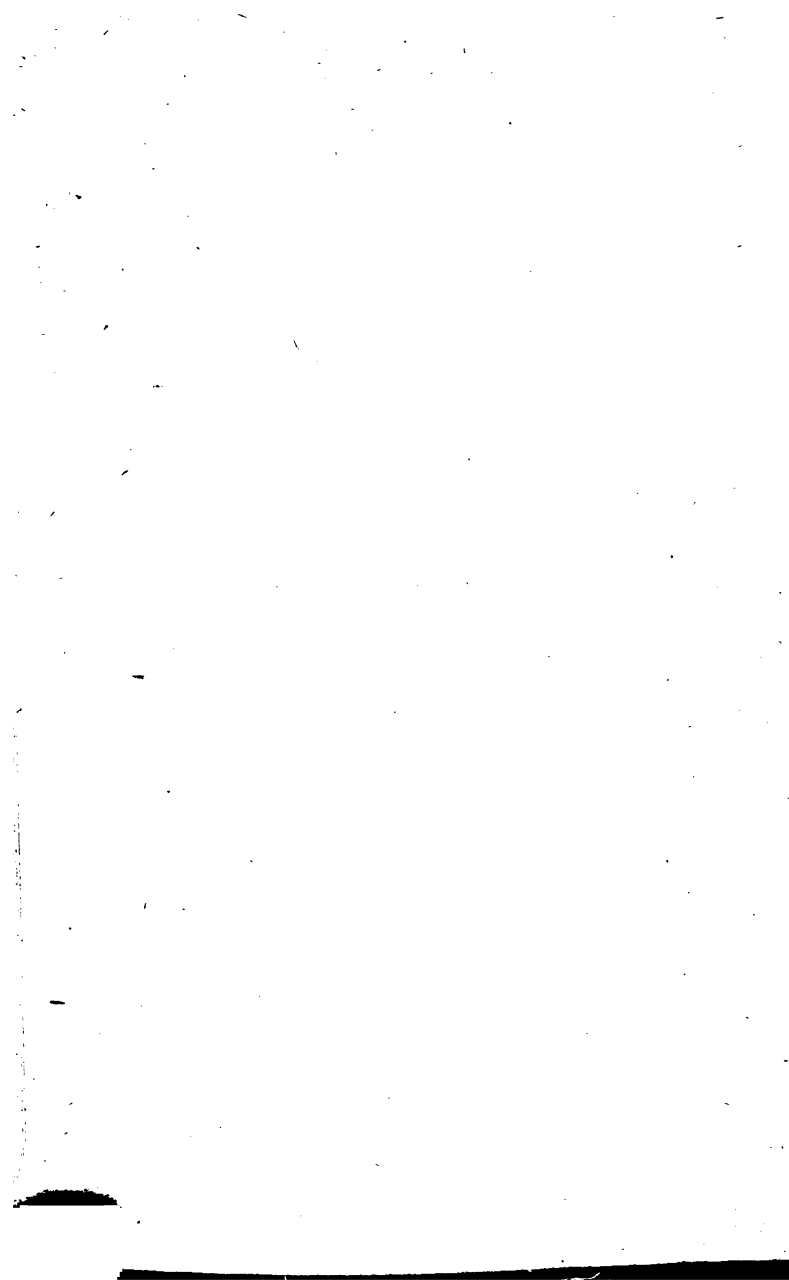
Lastly, as a means of gaining an honest livelihood, when the inmate is discharged from custody.

No one in this audience need be told that unskilled labor is to-day a drug on the market; that the great mass of unemployed are common

laborers. It is equally well known that it is almost impossible for a boy to secure a trade apprenticeship in any of the large shops of this country. If then the doors of the reformatory open to the boy, sending him out into the world without the skill to take his place as a craftsman, handicapped as he is by the fact that he has been an inmate of such an institution, then such a reformatory has come far short of its mission.

Of course, in the present state of public opinion, it is not possible to retain children sufficiently long in a reformatory to teach them a trade complete; but they may be given such a thorough grounding in its fundamental principles as will enable them to secure profitable employment. In the years that are coming, when public sentiment shall have become aroused to a sense of the duty that is owed to the unfortunate of God's creatures, children will not be allowed to run at will into vice and crime, thereby making their commitment to a reformatory necessary; but before they have learned the sin

and shame of the noisome tenement, the alley and the gutter, loving hearts, aided by liberal hands, will have gathered them into the kindergarten, from which they will enter the trade school, to receive a training for lives of industry and self-respect.



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This book has been for twenty years the only recognized text-book on the subject. The present edition was wholly re-written in 1896, and brings the subject up to date. It includes the author's "Handbook for School Trustees", and adds all the questions in school law given at uniform examinations from the first to March, 1896, with full answers as published by the State Department corrected to date according to changes in the law. As school law is hereafter to be required in all teachers' examinations, 3d and 3d grades, as well as 1st, this book is absolutely indispensable in every teacher, and hence has been put in the Standard Teachers' Library.

2. *Laws of New York relating to Common Schools,* with Comments and Instructions, and a digest of Decisions. Leather, 8vo, pp. 807. \$2.75.

This is what is known as "The Code of 1885", and is the final authority upon all disputed questions.

3. *A Descriptive Geography of the Empire State.* By C. W. BARDEEN. Cloth, 8vo, pp. 126, with 25 outline maps on uniform scale, 5 relief-maps, and 125 illustrations. 75 cts.

The advance orders for this book exceeded any that have before been received for any of our publications. Its most marked characteristic is its appeal to the eye. Its illustrations are abundant and typical, and its 25 outline maps on uniform scale, each making prominent one thing at a time, commend themselves at a glance. No New York school can afford to be without it.

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5. *Civil Government for Common Schools,* prepared as a manual for public instruction in the State of New York. To which are appended the Constitution of the United States, and the Declaration of Independence, 1776, etc. By HENRY C. KIRKPATRICK. Cloth, 18mo, pp. 220. 75 cts.

This book no longer needs description, as its use is almost universal. The present edition gives all the changes under the new constitution.

6. *A Chart of Civil Government.* By CHARLES T. POOLE. Showing 127 ill. 5 cts. The same folded for the pocket, in cloth covers, 25 cts.

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